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14. ABSTRACT The recent addition of <i>Building Partnerships</i> to United States Air Force doctrinal core competencies highlights the renewed emphasis that U.S. national security strategy places on security cooperation in securing regional stability, and producing partner nations able to defend against common threats. However, this added focus area brings with it challenges that the Air Force has historically failed to address in its operational plans. An objective evaluation of the Air Force's training and advisory missions in South Vietnam and later, Iraq reveals partner nation operational sustainment to be given short shrift in operational planning efforts. Successful air training and advisory missions hinge on properly addressing the operational sustainment factor as early as possible. Partner nation sustainment capacity needs to be built commensurate with the provided operational capacity. The Air Force faces unique challenges in the expeditionary, air training and advisory environment, and proper operational planning for such efforts can mitigate those concerns. Finally, the Air Force's operational planning process can be improved by effectively incorporating sustainment considerations in current and future air training and advisory missions.					
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**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
Newport, R.I.**

**BUILDING PARTNER AIR POWER: THE OPERATIONAL SUSTAINMENT  
IMPARITY**

by

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**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

**4 May 2011**

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## **Abstract**

The recent addition of *Building Partnerships* to United States Air Force doctrinal core competencies highlights the renewed emphasis that U.S. national security strategy places on security cooperation in securing regional stability, and producing partner nations able to defend against common threats. However, this added focus area brings with it challenges that the Air Force has historically failed to address in its operational plans. An objective evaluation of the Air Force's training and advisory missions in South Vietnam and later, Iraq reveals partner nation operational sustainment to be given short shrift in operational planning efforts. Successful air training and advisory missions hinge on properly addressing the operational sustainment factor as early as possible. Partner nation sustainment capacity needs to be built commensurate with the provided operational capacity. The Air Force faces unique challenges in the expeditionary, air training and advisory environment, and proper operational planning for such efforts can mitigate those concerns. Finally, the Air Force's operational planning process can be improved by effectively incorporating sustainment considerations in current and future air training and advisory missions.

## INTRODUCTION

*At the commencement of the Iraq occupation . . . no country had more experience managing large nation-building enterprises than did the United States.*

– James Dobbins et al.  
*The Beginner's Guide to Nation-Building*

The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) emphasized the critical importance of security force assistance in strengthening a partner nations' (PN) security capacity.<sup>1</sup> Following the QDR, the United States Air Force (USAF) presented to Congress their Fiscal Year 2012 Posture Statement, which added *Building Partnerships* as an Air Force Core Competency, and established an Air Advisor Academy to support global air advisory efforts.<sup>2</sup> The USAF's previous attempts to build a nation's air power capabilities revealed it is not an easy task. Although the USAF produced some operational successes in partnered counterinsurgency efforts in South Vietnam (SVN), Iraq, Afghanistan and other areas of operation, sustaining PN air forces often proved to be difficult and costly.

The herculean effort required to sustain a relatively modern air force, regardless of the size or makeup, cannot be understated. As such, the sustainment function (i.e., the PN's capability to maintain logistics support for the duration of their operations) must be thoroughly planned for prior to introducing new operational capabilities to a PN, and preferably before mounting any campaign where the U.S. may find itself engaged in such efforts. The importance of sustainment is not a new operational concept; military historians and operational theorists have written volumes on the effect of failed sustainment efforts during the world's wars, conflicts, and counterinsurgencies. Furthermore, U.S. Joint and Air

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1. U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review*, viii.

2. Donley and Schwartz, *Presentation to the Committee on Armed Services: Fiscal Year 2012 Air Force Posture Statement*, 20-21.

Force doctrine already warn the reader of the sustainment challenges one should expect to plan for in building partner capacity (BPC). Incredibly, the U.S. military still struggles to incorporate the lessons of past BPC efforts and effectively address sustainment in initial operational planning efforts.

In Vietnam and Iraq, the USAF failed to account for sustainment planning across three main areas: exercise of effective command and control, assessment of the partner nation's capabilities, and coordination across multiple agencies. Although their effect on nation-building efforts cannot be ignored, U.S. and PN political objectives and defense budget constraints are beyond the scope of operational-level planning in building partner air power. The USAF should focus on improving its application of the operational sustainment function in current and future BPC efforts.

## **COMMAND AND CONTROL OF THE AIR TRAINING AND ADVISORY MISSION**

*Without a clearly stated and attainable objective, the entire military effort becomes essentially pointless.*

– C.R. Brown  
*The Principles of War*

Before embarking on an effort to help build or restore a PN's air component, Air Force commanders' planners and advisors alike must first understand the desired end state. Regarding the U.S.' training and advisory efforts in Iraq, United States Forces – Iraq (USF-I) Commander, General Lloyd Austin states:

Through our actions, we will demonstrate our nation's commitment to the Iraqi people and set the conditions for an enduring partnership with a sovereign, stable, self-reliant, and unified Iraq.<sup>3</sup>

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3. United States Forces – Iraq, "Operation New Dawn," <http://www.usf-iraq.com/new-face-of-iraq/operation-new-dawn> (accessed 30 April 2011).

Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*, states, “Joint operation planning uses measurable desired effects to relate higher-level objectives and effects to component missions and tasks.”<sup>4</sup> Exercising effective command and control (C2) of air training and advisory missions requires operational commanders to clearly communicate operational-level tasks to subordinate units.

In 1969, the Air Force’s effort to support the acceleration of Vietnamization of the SVN Air Force presented several C2 challenges. First, the distinction between the U.S.’ operational warfighting and advisory group chains of command was often unclear. Brigadier General Kendall Young, Chief of the Air Force Advisory Group, reported to an Army officer in the Military Assistance Command – Vietnam (MACV), commanded by General Creighton Abrams. However, in practice Seventh Air Force Commander, General George Brown viewed himself as responsible for the Air Force advisory mission.<sup>5</sup> This command relationship created opportunities for conflicting priorities between the Seventh Air Forces tactical combat responsibilities, and the long-term goal of building a self-sustaining SVN Air Force.

Second, the U.S.’ advisory mission initially tasked air advisors with building a balanced and sustainable SVN air capability to cope with an insurgency. However, President Johnson’s desire to accelerate Vietnamization efforts in 1968 amounted to a change in the mission. Not only did U.S. advisors need to accelerate the transfer of responsibility for the air war to SVN forces, the required capabilities needed to match that of North Vietnamese Regular forces in addition to the Viet Cong insurgents.<sup>6</sup> The resultant change in requirements, however, conflicted with the shortened timeline. The SVN Air Force’s

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4. JP 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*, xv.

5. Nalty, *Air War Over South Vietnam 1968 – 1975*, 166.

6. Ibid. 165.

constrained sustainment capability required U.S. advisors to carefully select equipment that would allow for successful long-term integration into the SVN force structure. Ensuring the sustainability of the improved SVN Air Force's capabilities meant scaling back ambitious requests from South Vietnamese President Thieu for advanced aircraft.<sup>7</sup> However, this operational strategy was at odds with the mission of building an effective force capable of providing for South Vietnam's internal and regional national security.

Third, eschewing Thieu's desire for C-130s and F-4s, General Abrams focused Air Force BPC efforts on increasing SVN's rotary wing capabilities, heavily emphasizing the Bell UH-1.<sup>8</sup> Helicopters comprised a majority of SVN's air component; however, General Abrams, like General Westmoreland before him, envisioned these assets providing support for SVN Army airmobile operations. This theater-level strategy required U.S. Air Force advisors to provide training in unfamiliar tactics, and forced the SVN's air component to transition to more Army-centric core competencies.<sup>9</sup>

While Vietnam provided no shortage of lessons learned in building partner air power, recent U.S. efforts to build partner air power during counterinsurgency operations in Iraq revisited these challenges. In 2009, the U.S. Administration and Iraqi executive leaders pressed for initiating a withdrawal of U.S. military personnel from Iraq. On 1 January 2010, Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq (MNSTC-I) transitioned to United States Forces – Iraq, representing a change in focus from combat operations to an advisor-centric role.<sup>10</sup> During this transition period, Iraqi Training and Advisory Mission – Air

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7. Ibid., 164.

8. Ibid., 166-167.

9. Ibid.

10. Defense Video and Imagery Distribution System, "Transition to USF-I Marks Significant Step," <http://www.dvidshub.net/news/43366/transition-usf-marks-significant-step> (accessed 3 May 2011).

(ITAM-Air) leaders struggled to clearly objectify the desired end state for the Iraqi Air Force (IqAF).

The U.S. Air Force's advisory mission in Iraq remains essentially unchanged from 2009 and is reflected in USF-I's current mission statement:

Advises, trains, assists, and equips Iraqi Security Forces, enabling them to provide for internal security while building a foundation [*sic*] capability to defend against external threats.<sup>11</sup>

Though the desired end state in the above mission statement is clear, the ITAM-Air command staff failed to link the higher-level objective to clearly identified sustainment tasks. Despite several requests for guidance from field units, ITAM-Air headquarters hesitated to provide clearly defined IqAF foundational sustainment capabilities. The products ITAM-Air did provide were outdated, often represented divergent timelines, and in many instances contradicted each other. On another occasion, the 321st Air Expeditionary Wing (321 AEW) Vice Commander (the 321 AEW commands Air Force advisory units in Iraq), addressed the requested guidance by deferring to the tactical-level air advisors themselves.<sup>12</sup>

While mission planning may be conducted concurrently with operations, tactical air advisors should not be solely responsible for determining specified and implied tasks.

The mission intent must be clearly understood and the specified and implied tasks and their purposes should be stated to ensure mission execution satisfies all mission objectives.<sup>13</sup>

Operational-level staffs should coordinate with advisors at the tactical level, and then guide mission planning to ensure tasks are nested with the operational objective.

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11. United States Forces – Iraq, “Operation New Dawn,” <http://www.usf-iraq.com/new-face-of-iraq/operation-new-dawn> (accessed 30 April 2011).

12. Maj David Kunick (USAF Combat Air Advisor, Kirkuk RAB, Iraq), personal experience, 9 July 2009 – 18 December 2009.

13. *Air Advisor Handbook*, 15.

To further complicate the air advisory mission in Iraq, ITAM-Air failed to develop measures of effectiveness to assess mission progress or completion. The 321 AEAS commander at Kirkuk defined *mission complete* to be strictly time-based as opposed to effects-based; i.e., the level of capability IqAF units could be trained to before a future transition date (January 2010). Higher levels of command viewed the mission's nature as more open-ended, yet did so without clearly defining the specific effects or assessment indicators to be measured.<sup>14</sup> While time available for mission completion is a critical operational factor, planning operations in the absence of unified measures of effectiveness invites mission failure.

Distinct chains of command, and missions, between air advisory units and base support elements further complicated advisory efforts in Iraq. While the 321 AEW's advisors focused on direct sortie generation and pilot training effects, Airmen responsible for base operating support (transportation management, vehicles, petroleum/oils/lubricants, facilities, etc.) belonged to the 332 AEW, an operational wing. Thus, 332 AEW Airmen supported the USAF's operational mission; they were not trained advisors, nor were they assigned to the advisory mission. Base-level training for critical sustainment functions relied on subject matter experts not available in the organization responsible for the advisory mission.<sup>15</sup> This shortfall was addressed by realigning several operational groups under the 321 AEW, and establishing five Base Transition Teams responsible for base-level mission advisement in order to successfully transition bases from U.S. to IqAF control.<sup>16</sup> While this realignment will speed transition of internal security responsibilities to the IqAF, doing so

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14. Maj David Kunick (USAF Combat Air Advisor, Kirkuk RAB, Iraq), personal experience, 9 July 2009 – 18 December 2009.

15. Ibid.

16. U.S. Department of Defense, *Report to Congress: Measuring Security and Stability in Iraq*, 75.

earlier would have resulted in meeting operational objectives more effectively and efficiently.

Golenberg's *Iraq: Forward, Backward or Nowhere?* describes the operational planning situation in Iraq with, "By many accounts, the OIF post-war planning process did not provide commanders, before the start of combat operations, with a clear picture of the extent of their assigned post-war responsibilities."<sup>17</sup> History, joint doctrine, and decades of U.S. security cooperation experience emphasized the need to clearly identify operational objectives and specified tasks, and to effectively communicate them to subordinate air advisor teams. Finally, Air Force Doctrine Document 2-3, *Irregular Warfare* posits, "The Air Force is prepared to build this capability but early identification of requirements makes the realization of capability happen at a faster pace."<sup>18</sup>

### ASSESSING THE PARTNER NATION

*Effective planning is essential to ensure that the right types of capabilities are built with the most appropriate partners.*

– Jennifer D. P. Moroney et al.  
*International Cooperation with Partner Air Forces*

The RAND Corporation's 2007 monograph, *The Beginner's Guide to Nation-Building* states, "Military commanders must consider sustainability issues when providing equipment, as well as interoperability with existing equipment. Host nations may request expensive equipment as a status symbol when improved training and professionalism among the existing force would enhance the overall strength of the military."<sup>19</sup> In 2009, the RAND Corporation revealed that the Air Force failed to conduct standardized partner nation evaluations in any of the cases their study team reviewed. In only one reviewed case (Saudi

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17. Golenberg, *Iraq: Forward, Backward or Nowhere?*, 169.

18. AFDD 2-3, *Irregular Warfare*, 75.

19. Dobbins et al., *The Beginner's Guide to Nation-Building*, 35.

Arabia's Airborne Warning and Control System) had the Air Force conducted an overall program assessment; 20 years following the program's initiation.<sup>20</sup>

Air Force doctrine underscores the importance of assessing the PN. Air Force Doctrine Document 2-3, *Irregular Warfare*, states "Understanding the capabilities that the PN can sustain is vital for long-term success."<sup>21</sup> The Air Force's *Air Advisor Handbook* further stresses the need for air advisors to make realistic and sustainable recommendations, and cautions against mirror imaging USAF structure and capabilities.<sup>22</sup>

In 1969, Deputy Secretary of Defense David Packard addressed the Vietnamization of the Vietnam War by cautioning that the U.S. "Would have to make sure that the South Vietnamese knew how to operate, employ, and maintain" provided equipment.<sup>23</sup> However, evidence shows that the Air Force failed to accurately assess the PN across several areas.

In assuming responsibility for C-119G transport aircraft, SVN Air Force senior leaders hesitated in building an instructor pilot cadre capable of producing the necessary operational air crews. SVN leaders viewed instructor pilots as prestigious positions and conducted the selection process very deliberately. The SVN Air Force's delay in providing trained personnel initially hampered integration of the C-119G.<sup>24</sup> While the shortage of pilots was problematic, SVN Air Force logistics issues proved even more detrimental to the mission. The SVN Air Force's failure to properly operate and maintain the C-119G resulted in increased engine failures. Because SVN lacked an engine overhaul capability, they had to ship them back to the U.S. for the necessary repairs. This ill-fated combination of

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20. Moroney et al., *International Cooperation with Partner Air Forces*, 61.

21. AFDD 2-3, *Irregular Warfare*, 76.

22. *Air Advisor Handbook*, 18.

23. Nalty, *Air War Over South Vietnam 1968 – 1975*, 164.

24. *Ibid.*, 171-172.

imbalanced space and force factors, and the PN's sustainment capabilities caused a shortage of air crew, spare engines, and overall aircraft availability.

Deputy Secretary Packard emphasized simplicity in providing SVN sustainable air power, stating, "It is essential that we focus on what the Vietnamese forces must have rather than [on] what . . . we are doing that they could do."<sup>25</sup> In 1969, General John Ryan, Air Force Chief of Staff, belied this principle by furnishing the SVN Air Force's Logistics Command with a UNIVAC computer in order to automate their inventory control processes.<sup>26</sup> Two years later, the SVN Air Force's Air Logistics Command had failed to successfully incorporate computers into their culture and insisted on using their manual method of inventory control.<sup>27</sup> The SVN Air Force's inability to manage inventory, combined with frequently broken central supply system computers, led to spare parts shortages and frustrated supply chains.<sup>28</sup>

Spare parts and pilot shortages were not the only challenge to affect the SVN Air Force. Severe corrosion, a lack of trained maintainers, and reluctance on the part of their air crews to report aircraft discrepancies caused preventative, scheduled, and unscheduled maintenance to fall seriously behind.<sup>29</sup>

With the exception of logistics and sustainment, the MoD [Ministry of Defense] is currently on track to achieve its MEC [Minimum Essential Capability] objectives to provide oversight of the Iraqi armed forces prior to the U.S. Forces redeployment in December 2011.<sup>30</sup>

In 2010, the U.S. delivered the T-6A basic trainer to the IqAF, and began training Iraq's initial cadre of qualified instructor pilots. Iraq also expressed interest in acquiring the

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25. Ibid., 178.

26. Ibid., 226.

27. Ibid., 301.

28. Ibid., 409.

29. Ibid.

30. U.S. Department of Defense, *Report to Congress: Measuring Security and Stability in Iraq*, viii.

F-16 fighter, an advanced aircraft with complex maintenance and logistics requirements. In the handbook, *Developing Host Nation Logistics*, Australian Army Major Richard Baxter shared several Iraqi cultural and institutional barriers that cut across the Iraqi Ministry of Defense. Major Baxter assessed Iraqi Defense Force logistics capabilities, reviewed previous lessons learned, and drew comparisons from past operations, to include Vietnam. He highlighted the U.S.' tendency to mirror image when developing PN forces, the tendency to use a capability simply because U.S. forces have it, and the challenge in overcoming institutional barriers to change.<sup>31</sup>

I think the biggest hurdle we face for the T-6 is getting the necessary support to keep our operation airborne. Items such as maintenance will be a very critical part of our success.<sup>32</sup>

In addressing institutional and cultural barriers to organizational change, Major Baxter identified areas for concern also prevalent throughout the IqAF. First, the lion's share of Ministry of Defense resources (including personnel) was allocated to the Iraqi Army. Serving in the IqAF was not as prestigious as serving in their Army; therefore, recruiting educated, motivated personnel for the IqAF was challenging. Many Iraqi Airmen serving in aircraft maintenance positions viewed their job as a stepping stone to a more prestigious role, such as that of a pilot. IqAF maintenance and logistics units were largely understaffed, and personnel recruited into these roles typically received little to no English language training prior to employment. The low level of motivation of many IqAF logistics personnel, coupled

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31. *Developing Host Nation Logistics*, 69-70.

32. U.S. Air Forces Central, "First IqAF Instructor Pilot Begins Training Students," <http://www.centaf.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123248387> (accessed 30 April 2011).

with the Arabic-English language barrier made the USAF's training and advisory mission extremely challenging.<sup>33</sup>

Equally counter to developing self-sustainment was the IqAF's widespread reliance on contractor logistics support (CLS) for aircraft maintenance, and the accompanying supply chain management (SCM) activities required to request spare parts. The IqAF lacked much of the maintenance and logistics capabilities required to support training and combat flying operations; therefore, several U.S. contractors filled the void at tremendous expense to the Government of Iraq. Expense aside, each contractor also had proprietary, automated SCM systems. These systems were dependent on reliable electricity and internet connectivity; things the Iraqi air bases didn't always have available.<sup>34</sup>

Since the contractors ran independent operations, sometimes within the same Iraqi air base, advisors were unable to train IqAF Airmen to standardized supply discipline methods. Furthermore, not all of these contracts involved identical levels of support; some included little or no training for IqAF maintainers, and few required training in critical supply disciplines. U.S. air advisors were limited to training IqAF maintenance officers in only basic leadership and maintenance management principles, while IqAF enlisted technicians provided only basic services, and launched and recovered aircraft.<sup>35</sup>

Internally we face many challenges on how to responsibly withdraw from an active flying and advising mission. The biggest issue I see is coordinating the support to sustain this mission for as long as feasible leading up to the transition.<sup>36</sup>

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33. Maj David Kunick (USAF Combat Air Advisor, Kirkuk RAB, Iraq), personal experience, 9 July 2009 – 18 December 2009.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. U.S. Air Forces Central, "First IqAF Instructor Pilot Begins Training Students," <http://www.centaf.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123248387> (accessed 30 April 2011).

The IqAF lacked codified doctrine for sustainment activities, and had not established programs to ensure safety, security, and many other critical functions necessary to sustaining a professional air force. Several years after receiving their first aircraft, the IqAF had failed to produce approved instructions governing such crucial functions as supply, maintenance management, and explosives safety. While U.S. advisors could have planned such activities much earlier in their partnership with the IqAF, institutional bureaucracies within the Iraqi Ministry of Defense caused much of the friction. Like SVN Air Force leaders, Iraqi Airmen often shied away from assertive decision making, instead deferring approval of even low-level tasks to higher headquarters. The combined layers of institutional red tape within both the MNSTC-I and Ministry of Defense caused lengthy delays in providing standardized guidance to Iraqi Air Forces.<sup>37</sup>

Iraqi and South Vietnamese Airmen also shared a dislike for roles requiring standards enforcement, and truthfully reporting less-than-satisfactory news. Iraqi maintainers, specifically, struggled with fulfilling the responsibilities of Quality Assurance (QA) evaluator. Culturally, Iraqis found it distasteful to both be the bearer of bad news to a superior officer, and at the same time, point out the errors of their peers. Early attempts at establishing an Iraqi QA program found superior officers focusing on punishing the offenders instead of using the results to identify trends and improve the overall sustainment effort. For the Iraqi pilots' part, they often failed to report in-flight aircraft discrepancies for fear of being blamed for breaking the aircraft. Iraqi flying unit commanders struggled at times in

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37. Maj David Kunick (USAF Combat Air Advisor, Kirkuk RAB, Iraq), personal experience, 9 July 2009 – 18 December 2009.

prioritizing the long-term health of their aircraft fleet when dealing with requested no-/short-notice flying missions.<sup>38</sup>

Both Vietnam and Iraq cases exposed common pitfalls that U.S. air advisors experienced in building partner air power. However, these are areas the operational commander can adequately address in the planning phase by conducting a comprehensive assessment of the PN's culture, institutional tendencies, and existing infrastructure.

### **MULTIAGENCY COORDINATION**

*Working in conjunction with other U.S. government agencies and allied military forces to strengthen the security institutions of partner nations will be a crucial part of U.S. and allied efforts to defeat terrorist groups around the world.*

– Hon. Robert M. Gates  
*2010 Quadrennial Defense Review Report*

Air Force Doctrine Document 2-3, *Irregular Warfare* states, “Unity of effort across all instruments of power is essential to overall strategic success . . . the instruments of power – DIME – should operate in close cooperation among joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational organizations.”<sup>39</sup> The RAND Corporation’s *International Cooperation with Partner Air Forces* stresses close cooperation among multiple agencies during planning efforts to ensure optimum synchronization in matching the right capabilities with PNs.<sup>40</sup>

The 1973 Paris peace agreement between the U.S. and North Vietnam presented a turnabout in U.S. policy at the time. The Nixon Administration agreed to North Vietnamese Regular forces retaining control of occupied territory in SVN. The peace agreement also ended the U.S. training and advisory mission in SVN, and effectively eliminated the

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38. Ibid.

39. AFDD 2-3, *Irregular Warfare*, 8.

40. Moroney et al., *International Cooperation with Partner Air Forces*, 115.

objective of building a self-sustaining, combat effective, SVN Air Force.<sup>41</sup> When the MACV transitioned to Thailand in March of 1973, the SVN Air Force was ill prepared to cope with another major offensive from the North. Despite a rapid expansion of personnel and equipment, the SVN Air Force retained significant gaps in capabilities that were previously bolstered by U.S. air power. Furthermore, SVN had not adequately trained their personnel, and still lacked the sustainment culture and infrastructure required for long-term success.<sup>42</sup> Effective multiagency planning, with a clearly defined objective and end state in mind, would have mitigated these shortfalls.

Unified action is the synchronization, coordination, and/or integration of the activities of governmental and nongovernmental entities with military operations to achieve unity of effort.<sup>43</sup>

In the handbook, *Developing Host Nation Logistics*, Major Richard Baxter's estimate of multiagency coordination in Iraq points to strictly compartmentalized and redundant programs that often interfered with each other and consumed scarce resources.<sup>44</sup> The Air Force Security Assistance Center (AFSAC), responsible for the support of aircraft sold to the IqAF, managed the sustainment of aircraft at Kirkuk Regional Air Base. However, initial contracts failed to incorporate the training needs of the IqAF. AFSAC failed to assign dedicated Contracting Officer Representatives to Kirkuk until aircraft had been in operation for a year. Although the responsible Air Force program office held a program management review in Kirkuk in 2009, improved multiagency coordination would have identified sustainment shortfalls earlier in the program's life cycle.

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41. Nalty, *Air War Over South Vietnam 1968 – 1975*, 401.

42. *Ibid.*, 426.

43. JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*, xiii.

44. *Developing Host Nation Logistics*, 70.

## COUNTER-ARGUMENTS

The USAF argues that successful security partnerships “ensure interoperability, integration and interdependence” between parties, while building PN capacity to provide for their own security and promote regional stability.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, in its report *International Cooperation with Partner Air Forces*, the RAND Corporation posits that such partnerships often result in enduring support and service agreements, thereby promoting interdependence.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, the lack of a concrete operational accountancy for PN air power sustainment (i.e., an immediate plug-and-play solution) is an acceptable tradeoff for the opportunities that emerge from long-standing side-by-side cooperation. The 2010 QDR underwrites the value of advising PN forces concurrently with combat operations, and providing them the opportunity to “learn by doing.”<sup>47</sup>

Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*, states that the timeframe for planning branches and sequels to current operations is dynamic and varies according to a multitude of factors.<sup>48</sup> The extent to which a PN is able to build its air forces is largely dependent on the PN’s financial capacity and political climate during the engagement period, and these factors remain fluid throughout security cooperation relationships. Differing means and cultures make it difficult to build standard sustainment advisory plans for a generic PN. Although commanders may develop a general estimate of the security cooperation situation, PN economic and political planning factors are largely unknown at the outset of operations. Operational commanders (and their staffs) may rightfully accept this ambiguity, and its associated risk, in their training and advisory mission plans.

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45. Donley and Schwartz, *Presentation to the Committee on Armed Services: Fiscal Year 2012 Air Force Posture Statement*, 20.

46. Moroney et al., *International Cooperation with Partner Air Forces*, 17-19.

47. U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review*, 27.

48. JP 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*, xvii.

Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*, also argues that the transition to stabilizing and enabling civil authority presents challenges in shifting the joint forces' focus and requires careful coordination with other agencies.<sup>49</sup> The USAF's efforts to accurately plan for successful PN sustainment activities often hinge critically on agencies such as the U.S. Department of State (DOS) to help build solid PN transportation, economic, financial and commercial foundations. Without such foundational national capabilities, a PN defense establishment cannot possibly sustain itself long-term without assistance. These national-level efforts are beyond the scope of USAF capacity building efforts, and combined with the afore-mentioned planning factors make planning for successful, operational sustainment extremely uncertain.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Interoperability and interdependence are, in fact, desired effects of U.S. security cooperation relationships. As is often the case, operational necessity may also require teaching on-the-job, while simultaneously releasing equipment to a PN. However, the USAF should not forgo proper operational planning under the precept that new capabilities may be introduced at a later date, or that the mission may be modified from its original scope and/or intent. The USAF should continue to ensure, prior to a transfer, that equipment provided under a security assistance effort is sustainable by the PN.

While PN economic and political factors may be unknown to the fidelity required to draft a completely error-free operational plan, the USAF can still conduct a comprehensive PN assessment prior to plan approval. Improved multiagency coordination, starting with DOS and their country teams, can minimize the fog and friction in determining non-military aspects of a PN. Although U.S. Secretary of State is the lead agent for multiagency stability

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49. JP 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*, IV-35.

and reconstruction activities, the USAF is not precluded from taking part in interagency deliberations regarding PN air force sustainment capabilities and requirements.

USAF operational commanders and planning staffs must ensure air training and advisory mission objectives are clearly communicated to subordinate units, and that specified and implied tasks are nested with the theater strategic and operational objectives. While objectives and associated tasks may change over time, clear communication up and down the advisory chain of command is critical to mission success.

The USAF must also ensure operational-level advisor staffs are trained in PN assessment methods, as well as multiagency coordination activities. The Air Force Air Advisory Academy curriculum should include effective PN-applicable language training, measures of effectiveness development, multiagency coordination, and PN assessment methods. To the extent possible, the curriculum should also require students to analyze their gaining unit's mission statement, objectives, and any associated source documents. Air advisors should also be instructed on how to use the joint and multiagency resources available within their area of operations. Finally, the USAF Warfare Center should invite HQ USAF/A4, HQ AFSOC/A4, HQ AFCENT/A4, and HQ AETC/A4 participation in future *Air Advisor Handbook* revision efforts. Coordination with USAF logistics subject matter experts will ensure logistics and sustainment activities, and associated lessons learned are properly addressed in this valuable resource.

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